

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for retrieving a replica of an electronic document in a computer network, comprising:

selecting at least one replica number, by applying a given function requiring the replica number and a document identifier as input, wherein said document identifier comprises a predefined address where the replica is stored.[:]]

determining at least one entity identifier, each entity identifier representing an entity in the network that might provide the replica, and

addressing a document related request to at least one of the identified entities;

wherein, upon receiving a "replica not available" response from each of the addressed entities:

setting a lowest replica number out of the addressed replica numbers as an upper limit for a new set of replica numbers associated with another entity to be addressed with the document related request ~~the entities~~; and

selecting the another entity from the identified entities associated with the new set of replica numbers for addressing the document related request.

2. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, comprising selecting $k=N$ replica numbers, wherein N is a maximum number for replicas, by applying the given function k times: determining k entity identifiers.

3. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, comprising:

selecting k replica numbers from a maximum number of N replicas with $k < N$, by applying the given function k times, and

determining k entity identifiers.

4. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 3, wherein $k \leq 5$.
5. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 3, wherein $k = 1$.
6. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, comprising addressing the document related request to all identified entities.
7. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, comprising addressing the document related request to only selected ones of the identified entities.
8. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, comprising addressing the document related request only to one entity selected from the identified entities.
9. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, further comprising calculating a cost function for each of the k entities, the cost function providing a cost value as result which indicates a cost to address the relevant entity.
10. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 7 further comprising calculating a cost function for each of the k entities, the cost function providing a cost value as result which indicates a cost to address the relevant entity, wherein each entity to be addressed is selected from the identified entities due to an associated cost value.
11. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 10, wherein addressed entities consist of at least one entity showing a lowest cost value/s.
12. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 6, wherein cost values for the addressed entities are derived from communication with these entities.

13. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 6, wherein cost values for the addressed entities are derived from a cost database.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the another entity is selected from the identified entities by choosing an entity with an associated replica number that is lower than the replica number associated to the entity/entities to which the previous request was addressed.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the another entity is selected because of its associated cost value.

18. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, further comprising
selecting from the identified entities at least one most preferred entity, and
addressing the document related request to each most preferred entity.

19. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 18, wherein each most preferred entity is selected according to said each most preferred entity's distance from the retrieving entity.

20. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the distance of an entity is derived from the associated entity identifier.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the second preferred entity is selected from the set of identified entities according to its distance from the retrieving entity, wherein the closest distance is derived from the associated entity identifier.

23. (Previously presented) A storage medium comprising computer program code which, when loaded in a processor unit of a computing entity, configures the processor unit to perform a method as claimed in claim 1.

24. (Previously presented) A computing entity for retrieving a replica of an electronic document in a computer network, comprising a processor unit configured to perform a method according to claim 1.

25. (Canceled)

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously presented) A computing entity for depositing a replica of an electronic document in a computer network, comprising a control unit designed to perform a method according to claim 1.

28. (Previously presented) An article of manufacture comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein for causing retrieval of a replica of an electronic document in a computer network, the computer readable program code means in said article of manufacture comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to effect the steps of claim 1.

29. (Currently amended) An apparatus to retrieve a replica of an electronic document in a computer network, said apparatus comprising:

a processor configured for:

selecting at least one replica number, by applying a given function employing the replica number and a document identifier as input, wherein said document identifier comprises a predefined address where the replica is stored;

determining at least one entity identifier, each entity identifier representing an entity in the network that might provide the replica, and

addressing a document related request to at least one of the identified entities;

wherein, upon receiving a "replica not available" response from each of the addressed entities:

setting a lowest replica number out of the addressed replica numbers as an upper limit for a new set of replica numbers associated with another entity to be addressed with the document related request ~~the entities~~; and

selecting the another entity from the identified entities associated with the new set of replica numbers for addressing the document related request.

30. (Previously presented) A computer program product comprising a physical computer readable storage medium having computer readable program code embodied therein for causing retrieval of a replica of an electronic document in a computer network, the computer readable program code in said computer program product for causing a computer to effect the functions of claim 29.